

CALIFORNIA

OCCUPATIONAL GUIDES

MIDWIVES

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INTEREST AREA
SOCIAL



WHAT DOES A MIDWIFE DO?

MIDWIVES have helped women deliver their babies for centuries; in fact, the profession is mentioned in the Book of Genesis. In America, the half-century between 1770 and 1820 saw upper-class women begin to favor male physicians in the lying-in room, and as a result the birthing process was increasingly viewed as a medical problem to be managed by medical doctors. If not for the continued need of trained Midwives to assist lower

income and immigrant women during those years, the Midwife in the United States may have become a footnote in medical history. Over the past 40 years, the occupation of Midwife has enjoyed a renaissance.

Midwives deliver babies of normal, non-Caesarian birth. They provide primary care for women and their babies during pregnancy, labor, delivery, and after birth. Prenatal care, labor and delivery management, postpartum, and infant care are at the very heart of their work. In California, Midwives are either called Certified Nurse-Midwives (CNM) or Licensed Direct Entry Midwives (LM), depending on their training.

Midwives perform the following tasks:

- Examine pregnant women and identify any health problems.
- Provide gynecological care (such as Pap smears) throughout a woman's lifetime.
- Screen for normal pregnancies using laboratory and other diagnostic tests.
- Counsel about nutritional, behavioral, and environmental effects on pregnancy.
- Provide physical and emotional support during labor.
- Assist normal, natural (non-caesarian) deliveries.
- Assess the baby's health and nutritional needs.
- Teach mothers self and infant care techniques such as breastfeeding and the importance of child/parent bonding.
- Provide prenatal, postpartum, and newborn care, as well as menopausal services and family planning visits.
- Act as assistants at cesarean section births.

Both Certified Nurse-Midwives and Licensed Direct Entry Midwives are supervised by a doctor. However, this does not mean that the supervising doctor is present during deliveries.

WHAT SKILLS ARE IMPORTANT?

Important skills, knowledge, and abilities for Midwives include:

- Service Orientation – Actively looking for ways to help people.
- Social Perceptiveness – Being aware of others' reactions and understanding why they react as they do.
- Judgment and Decision Making – Considering the relative costs and benefits of potential actions to choose the most appropriate one.
- Reading Comprehension – Understanding written sentences and paragraphs in work-related documents.
- Coordination – Adjusting actions in relation to others' actions.
- Critical Thinking – Using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions or approaches to problems.
- Active Listening – Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.
- Medicine and Dentistry – Knowledge of the information and techniques needed to diagnose and treat human injuries, diseases, and deformities. This includes symptoms, treatment alternatives, drug properties and interactions, and preventive health-care measures.
- Biology – Knowledge of plant and animal organisms, their tissues, cells, functions, interdependencies, and interactions with each other and the environment.
- Oral Expression – The ability to communicate information and ideas in speaking so others will understand.
- Oral Comprehension – The ability to listen to and understand information and ideas presented through spoken words and sentences.
- Problem Sensitivity – The ability to tell when something is wrong or is likely to go wrong. It does not involve solving the problem, only recognizing there is a problem.

WHAT'S THE WORK ENVIRONMENT?

Nurse Midwife services are primarily provided within a hospital or clinical setting. Licensed Direct Entry Midwives generally do their work in private residences or in birthing centers.

Certified Nurse-Midwives work wherever women are receiving health care. About 90 percent are salaried by physicians groups, hospitals, HMOs, community clinics, and educational institutions.

The work itself is associated with long hours and irregular schedules. For many Midwives, the satisfaction of caring for childbearing women and pioneering a model of care giving more than compensate for workplace irregularities.

Union Membership

Certified Nurse-Midwives who work in hospitals are sometimes represented by unions.

WHAT'S THE CALIFORNIA JOB OUTLOOK?

Midwives attend approximately ten percent of all natural births nationally. The California Board of Registered Nurses reports that 850 CNMs are licensed in the State; of these, 700 are currently practicing. Since the State began licensing Nurse-Midwives in 1971, there have been 1,069 Certified Nurse-Midwives.

Despite legislation creating the new category of Licensed Direct Entry Midwife in 1993, California currently has no training programs to prepare aspiring Licensed Direct Entry Midwives for licensing requirements. As of July 2001, there were 147 Licensed Direct Entry Midwives in California, all trained out of State. The demand for workers could soon be far greater than the supply of Licensed Direct Entry Midwives. Beginning Licensed Direct Entry Midwives in California may face difficulties of both finding a doctor willing to supervise their practice and obtaining medical malpractice insurance.

Trends

Critical shortages of qualified care for expectant mothers exist in some areas, indicating that opportunities should grow steadily in midwifery. Some counties have only one obstetrician; a few counties have none.

WHAT DOES THE JOB PAY?

California Earnings

Registered Nurses 2002 Wages

Hourly wages range from	\$23.92 to \$32.84
Average hourly wage	\$28.26
Average annual wage	\$58,793

Source: *Occupational Employment Survey of Employers* by EDD/LMID.

The wages above are for the broader occupation, Registered Nurses, which includes Nurse-Midwives.

Midwives in private practice charge their patients for individual services the way a physician would, with delivery fees varying between \$1,200 and \$2,500. Earnings can be \$100,000 or more annually for those in private practice. It is important to note that malpractice insurance for independent Midwives can be quite expensive.

Hours

Midwives are on call to attend deliveries, which can happen at any hour, any day. Prenatal examinations and checkups and follow-up care after birth can be scheduled during normal working hours.

Benefits

Most CNMs employed by doctors, hospitals, or clinics receive vacation and sick leave, retirement benefits, and medical, dental, and vision insurance.

HOW DO I PREPARE FOR THE JOB?

Education and Training

- *Certified Nurse-Midwives* – registered nurses who have completed an additional course of midwifery training (from nine months to two years) at an accredited school, passed an American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) certification exam, and received a license from the California Board of Registered Nurses.
- *Licensed Direct Entry Midwives* – Midwives who have met California requirements for midwifery licensing and received a license from the Medical Board of California Licensing Division.

Licensing and Certification

Certified Nurse-Midwives are registered nurses who are licensed through the Board of Registered Nursing. CNMs must earn an associate, diploma, bachelors, or master's degree in nursing, as well as complete a specialized program in midwifery, before they can qualify to take the Board exam.

The American College of Certified Nurse-Midwives establishes the educational and training requirements for CNMs and offers several paths. In California, the University of California at San Francisco, University of Southern California, San Diego State University, Martin Luther King/Drew University in Los Angeles, and University of California at Los Angeles offer ACNM-approved Certified Nurse-Midwives training programs.

Licensed Direct Entry Midwives need to meet one of the following three requirements to be eligible to take the California Medical Board licensing exam:

- Graduation from a three-year midwifery education program approved by the Board, or
- Proof of sufficient medical and clinical knowledge to pass the Board exam by successfully challenging courses (pass written and oral assessments) of an approved midwifery education program, or
- Licensure as Midwives by another state whose standards are equivalent to California standards.

Certain personal traits are critical for this work: a real love for the work and a caring attitude are the most important. These professionals need the ability to interact on an extremely personal level with all clients, inspire confidence, make accurate decisions rapidly, and take appropriate action as changes occur. As patient advocates, they need excellent communication skills to successfully interact with other professionals on their medical team. They also need both physical and emotional stamina to do their work.

Continuing Education

Certified Nurse-Midwives are required to complete a minimum of 30 credit hours every two years in subjects relevant to the practice of nursing. Courses must be taken from providers approved by, or entities recognized by, the Board of Registered Nursing.

HOW DO I FIND THE JOB?

Certified Nurse-Midwives network through their professional associations and apply directly to hospitals, clinics, physician groups, and birthing centers. Recent graduates obtain job leads from their school placement service.

Licensed Direct Entry Midwives usually establish their own practice or practice with a partner. Many expand their practice through contacts made while teaching childbirth sessions and conducting educational seminars. Newly Licensed Direct Entry Midwives may have expanded opportunities working for hospital, clinics, and doctor offices.

Direct application to employers remains one of the most effective job search methods. Private firms are listed in the yellow pages under Midwives. California job openings can be found at various online job-listing systems including CalJOBSSM at www.caljobs.ca.gov or at America's Job Bank at www.ajb.dni.us.

For other occupational and wage information and a listing of the largest employers in any county, visit the Employment Development Department Labor Market Information Web page at www.calmis.ca.gov. Find further job search assistance from your nearest Job Service office www.edd.ca.gov/jsloc.htm or the closest One-Stop site listed on the California WorkNet site, www.sjtcc.ca.gov/sjtccweb/one-stop.

WHERE CAN THIS JOB LEAD?

Certified Nurse-Midwives may use their administrative skills to direct a nurse-midwifery program in a hospital or clinic or go into private practice. Some combine their midwifery career with teaching at university nursing or public health schools or do related clinical research.

Self-employed Midwives measure success and advancement in terms of a growing practice and recognition in their field.

OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

California Board of Registered Nursing
P.O. Box 944210
Sacramento, CA 94244-2100
(916) 322-3350
www.rn.ca.gov

Medical Board of California
Midwifery Program
1426 Howe Avenue, Suite 54
Sacramento, CA 95825-3236
(916) 263-2393
www.medbd.ca.gov/midwives.htm

American College of Nurse-Midwives
818 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 900
Washington, DC 20006
(202) 728-9860
www.acnm.org

California Association of Midwives
P.O. Box 460606
San Francisco, CA 94146
(800) 829-5791
www.californiamidwives.org

Employment Projections by Occupation
www.calmis.ca.gov/htmlfile/subject/occproj.htm

Employment and Wages by Occupation
[www.calmis.ca.gov/file/occup\\$/OES\\$.htm](http://www.calmis.ca.gov/file/occup$/OES$.htm)

RELATED OCCUPATIONAL GUIDES

Registered Nurses and Nurse Practitioners	No. 29
Licensed Vocational Nurses	No. 313

OCCUPATIONAL CODE REFERENCES

SOC (*Standard Occupational Classification*)
Registered Nurses 29-1111

O*NET (*Occupational Information Network*)
Registered Nurses 29-1111.00

OES (*Occupational Employment Statistics*)
Registered Nurses 32502

DOT (*Dictionary of Occupational Titles*)
Nurse Midwife 075.264-014